

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL
CULTURE WITH TEACHER
RETENTION

By

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CULTURE WITH TEACHER RETENTION

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Abstract: A midwestern educational institution focused on career and technical education experienced a high teacher attrition rate since 2012. The school has struggled to find qualified teachers in the rural communities it serves. The study focused on the relationship of school culture and teacher retention. Using Mary Douglas's Typology of Grid and Group and qualitative methods the culture of the educational institution was evaluated. The data suggest there is dissonance in the perceived culture and the preferred culture. This discord appears to have a negative effect on teacher retention at the midwestern educational institution.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, Oklahoma has experienced overwhelming teacher shortages. The teacher shortage is a concern of every educational institution in the state. For multiple reasons, teachers in Oklahoma are leaving the classroom (Eger & Hardiman, 2018). As of August 1, 2018, districts reported 536 teaching vacancies with 10% of the teachers leaving having a decade of experience (Oklahoma State School Boards Association, 2019). It is alarming that established teachers are leaving the profession. Schools already have a large task of educating young people in a society that continues to demand more and more of our schools. Working in a district with a high attrition rate is discouraging and frustrating for administration, instructional staff, students, and parents. With the widespread effect on stakeholders, school districts could possibly benefit from knowing why teachers are leaving (Lazarev, Toby, Zacamy, Lin, & Newman, 2017).

One such educational institution struggling with high teacher attrition is a midwestern educational institution which was chosen for this study. As a technology center, the institution provides career and workforce training in a rural predominantly farming community. Each program is unique with regulations and guidelines from multiple sources. Since 2012, 16 full-time faculty have been replaced, which represents a 106% turnover of instructional staff. Using qualitative methods, this study will examine

the low retention rate phenomenon occurring from the culture perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of school culture and teacher retention.

Statement of the Problem

The state of Oklahoma made national news in the spring of 2018 for its teacher walkout. Teachers marched on the state Capitol demanding education funding to support classroom instruction, raise teacher salaries and improve the condition of education (White, 2018). Salaries of teachers in Oklahoma are no secret as bordering states have advertised in Oklahoma and boasted of higher salaries (Grant, 2018). Many Oklahoma teachers are recruited to those bordering states for better-paying positions. However, money is not the only reason teachers leave the teaching profession in Oklahoma. The work environment and general attitude about the condition of schools plays a significant role in the decision to leave or stay. Research says administrators influence those attitudes and feelings in the ways in which they interact with teachers and build an environment for their work (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). Because teacher retention rates are low, more research is needed to evaluate why teachers are leaving.

Theoretical Perspective

The Grid and Group theory by Mary Douglas was used to evaluate the influential factors of school culture, contributing to teacher retention. Mary Douglas's Typology of Grid and Group contextualizes cultural phenomenon into four groups and two dimensions (Harris, 2014). Grid and group originate from social anthropology and explains social behaviors and experiences. "Organizations use power and authority to direct the behavior

of their members as well as to control the level and type of involvement of their participants” (Harris, 2015, 39). Grid measures the degree to which choices are influenced by expectations, procedures, and rules. Group measures loyalty to the social unit. Grid and group are designed to consider the total social environment as well as the relationships among members and their context (Harris, 2014). The matrix of grid and group move from weak to strong for both dimensions (Harris, 2014). A strong grid is associated with minimal autonomy and are dominated by rules and roles which define personal interactions. Conversely, weak grid is associated with maximal autonomy few rules and with competition for roles. Group relates to strong or weak allegiance to the organization. In strong group environments the group is more important than the individual. A greater-good attitude toward the survival of the group influences relationships. Whereas weak group environments are influenced most by individual ambitions over the goals of the group. The survival of the individual is more important than the group (Harris, 2015).

Based on these dimensions, four groups are established, which include individualist, bureaucratic, corporate, and collectivist. These four dimensions represent the mindsets which influence the social environment (Harris, 2014).

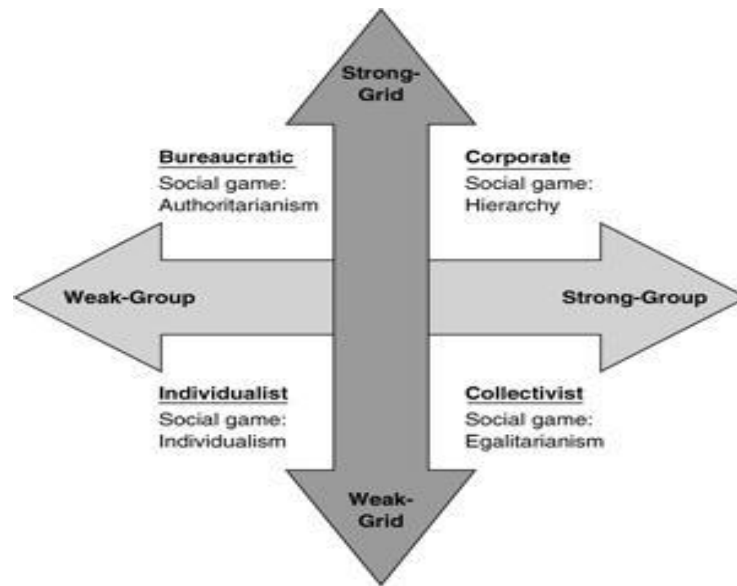


Figure 1 illustrates the four dimensions and social games of Mary Douglas's Typology. Adapted from "Mary Douglas's Typology of Group and Grid," by E. Harris, (2014) In V. A. Anfara Jr, & N. T. Mertz (Eds.), *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research*, p 135. Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage Publishing.

Schools with a bureaucratic culture group are very structured with the superintendent at the top of the chain of command (Harris, 2015). Duties and authority are granted from the top down. Very little autonomy is granted to teachers in this environment. Teachers may find scrutiny of their teaching practices and classroom management by their superiors. The cultural preference of this environment is authoritarianism. Administrators of this environment make decisions with little to no consideration for teachers and expect strict obedience to authority. Loyalty to the school is proportionately low with little value in group goals (Harris,2015).

Schools with a corporate culture group have a chain of command with hierarchy cultural preference. Loyalty to the group is strong with an emphasis on traditions and survival of the group. Members of this group believe "what is good for the corporation is good for the

individual”(Harris, 2015, p.46). Individual goals are sacrificed for the success of the group. Group goals and activities are considered in decision making and role variances are found throughout the system establishing a cohesive working group. In the corporate culture the success or failure of the school is shared by all (Harris, 2015).

Schools with an individualist culture group are guided by the ambitions of the individuals of the group with little value on long-term corporate survival. This group is characterized by maximal autonomy with poorly defined roles, rules and responsibilities. Competition for resources exists and social positions are earned. The cultural preference for this group is individualism where risks are taken for personal gain (Harris, 2015).

Schools with a collectivist culture group reject the authority of both bureaucratic and corporate environments. This group prefers the egalitarianism environment where resources are equally distributed, and survival of the group is the most important. For collectivist unity and conformity to the group are paramount. Outsides are not trusted and viewed suspiciously the group. The communal connection between members of the group ensures the survival of the school (Harris, 2015).

Harris (2015) describes in detail how to adopt grid and group for the educational setting. Educators value the theory because it explains roles, pressures, autonomy, and constraints of the social environment. The decision for educators to leave, stay, or move is a choice influenced by multiple dynamics. The grid and group theory set a framework to examine those social dynamics that influence the decision. The culture built and supported by administration influences the educational environment. The day to day practices in the school, coupled with the perceptions of the staff, make up the dynamics

of the school setting (Buchanan, 2010; Harris, 2014). These dynamics contribute to the satisfaction of the employees. Some things about teaching are universal; however, the culture differs among educational settings (Harris, 2014). Those differences can explain the difficulties some districts experience in retaining teachers.

Research Questions

The focus of this study is to examine the influences of culture on teacher retention.

Utilizing qualitative research methods, data were collected to answer these research questions:

R1. What is the relationship of school culture and teacher retention?

R2. What characteristics of school culture impact teacher retention?

R3. How can school culture be described?

Researcher's Perspective

The researcher is a nine-year veteran of the school district. The district predominantly serves agriculture communities with little to no economic growth. There are few large employers in the area with good wages and benefits. Other area schools have not experienced the same instructor turnover. Dialogue among colleagues with an interest in the success and morale of the school has generated much curiosity. The continual search to replace instructors over the past seven years inspired this research.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided for clarity and understanding of significant terms utilized in the study.

School Culture: Culture is the shared beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors by all members of the school environment (Barkley, Lee, & Eadens, 2014; Lewis, Asberry, DeJarnett, & King, 2016).

Attrition: Teachers leaving the school district (Shen, 1997).

Retention: Teachers that stay at the school district (Shen, 1997).

Significance of the Study

The educational institution offers workforce preparation and has experienced 84% total (faculty and staff) employee turnover since 2012. The high attrition rate is concerning to many stakeholders including administration, faculty and staff. As individuals have left the overall institution, two programs have been closed. Understanding why teachers are leaving can influence school districts to implement improvements to the teaching environment. The goal of this study is to identify issues of culture and or climate that may influence teacher retention.

Studies such as this can assist other educational entities in avoiding teacher loss.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the participants understood the questions and answered them honestly and accurately. It is also assumed that the researcher has accurately recorded and interpreted participants' experiences.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher shortages across the state are a concern for all administrators. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (2019) published the Oklahoma Public Schools: Fast Facts 2018-2019 report. This publication reported emergency certification numbers among other public-school data. In 2012 only 32 emergency teacher certifications were issued, which is insignificant compared to the 3,034 issued during the July 2018 to April 2019 period (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2019). These emergency certifications may reflect a staggering teacher shortage due to teachers leaving Oklahoma school districts. Multiple factors influence a teacher's decision to leave the profession or a district. This study examines the shared beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes, as well as the perceptions of the current and former instructional staff to identify the culture characteristics leading to high attrition rates in one school.

Administrator Influence on Teacher Retention

Teachers new to teaching, without the benefit of pedagogical content, may find teaching challenging. In particular, those who have been recruited directly from business and industry are often skilled in the trade they will teach but have not been trained as a teacher. That statement is most evident in the career tech system. Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers are professionals that leave their careers to teach having no formal training in the art of teaching. Teaching is both an art and a science that requires

practice, time, patience, and help. “A good teacher must be able to transform knowledge into learning activities that motivate students to learn” (Moore, 2015, p. 4). For new teachers developing those activities is challenging and often overwhelming. Teacher support from administration is paramount to a teacher meeting the demands and staying in the profession.

CTE teachers are especially vulnerable to leaving the profession because they often lack experience as a preservice teacher. When administrators are aware of this situation, they can contribute to teacher retention, by providing support and development for the teacher (Wynn, Carboni, and Patall (2007). Mentor programs are one way of giving teachers what they need. Through mentoring programs, teachers are encouraged to build positive relationships (Hasselquist, Herndon, & Kitchel, 2017). Such relationships can promote feelings of belonging based on supervisor support and relations with colleagues (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Based on research by Dupriez, Delvaux, and Lothaire (2016) teachers that attended preparation programs are more likely to remain in the profession. Unfortunately for CTE teachers entering the classroom that preparation may come too late.

School principals play the most influential role in teacher attrition, and many do not understand the extent of their influence in the decision to leave (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). Youngs (2007) believes that school leaders influence the confidence of a teacher in reaching teaching goals, especially teachers new to the profession. Reaching goals allows teachers to feel accomplished and effective, which contributes to job satisfaction. Teachers benefit from trust in leadership. Principal’s actions as a leader promote teachers’ trust, which also enhances job satisfaction (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). Actions as a leader build or tear down trust, so principals would benefit from always be mindful of their influence.

Perceived Environment

In the busy teaching environment, most teachers have one planning period per day. During this time, teachers must plan lessons, grade papers, create progress reports, make copies, file reports, and go to the bathroom. As a result, teaching is perceived as having a never-ending workload with huge responsibility and with little respect or compensation (Buchanan, 2010). It is no wonder that many teachers can feel emotionally exhausted. Lack of time, constant pressure, and subject taught coupled with exhaustion play a negative role in job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Strong relationships with administrators and fellow teachers improve the perception and experiences of teachers (Rudasill, Snyder, Levinson, & Adelson, 2018). Consonance among administration and teaching staff is important to strengthening these relationships (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). However, a fractured school environment with no unity among staff creates feelings of isolation and dissonance among teachers. (Buchanan, 2010). These relationships are vital to teachers in small districts that do not have multiple teachers per subject or grade level. Administrators can build organizational environments based on harmony among all groups in the educational setting (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The accord created by administrators and colleagues combats those feelings of isolation and promotes loyalty to the organization and a positive perception of the school (Springer, Clark, Strohfus, & Belcheir, 2012).

A school's culture plays a contributory role in a positive perception of the work environment and determines the daily functions of a school. Every school forms its own culture, and administration should be conscious of the influences on the evolution of that culture (Barkley, Lee, & Eadens, 2014). Research suggests that school leadership is considered one of the most influential factors in the establishment of the caliber of a school (Lewis, Asberry,

DeJarnett, & King, 2016). “Principals and administrative staff are most effective when they do not act intrusively as administrative superiors, but instead offer needed resources, emotional care, and support” (Lee & Li, 2015, p. 15). Administrators’ behaviors and attitudes translate into the culture.

Cultural Preference

Each school has a unique culture. This cultural diversity exists because all members of an organization have a cultural preference (Harris, 2015). These preferences are divided into four categories individualism, authoritarian, hierarchical, and egalitarian. Daily, people can function in multiple categories depending on the situation. Each culture can be broken down into qualities and mindsets, motivating factors, ideal work setting, and supervisory preference. Understanding the dynamics of each category provides valuable insight into individual preferences. This information can be used to make productive changes to the social unit (Harris, 2015).

The individualist prefers to make their own decision and have control over their destiny (Harris, 2015). They like competition and challenges while relishing personal freedoms and independence. Individuals take risks because they are motivated personal gain. The ideal work setting for an individualist is one with limited rules and competition for resources. Supervision of individuals in this group should be hands-off with honest, open lines of communication (Harris, 2015).

The mindset of an authoritarian group is detail-oriented, punctual, and entrenched in rules and routines. This group is motivated by praise for a job well done and promotions.

Authoritarians prefer a work setting that is very structured with centralized decision making. Supervisors for this group must give detailed instructions while closely monitoring and evaluating their work (Harris, 2015).

The qualities of hierarchical groups desire to protect tradition and group interest while benefiting the organization. This group is motivated by rewards for loyalty and planning long- and short-term goals. The ideal work environment is one where goals are prioritized and operational. They also like duties to be straightforward and required. The ideal supervisor for a hierarchical group is one that gives support, listens to ideas, and recognizes accomplishments but makes the final decision (Harris, 2015).

The egalitarians are peacemakers but will fight injustice. They believe in equality and “that those who have more should give more to the group” (Harris, 2014, p 98). Admiration and teamwork motivate egalitarians. They prefer to work in environments where resources are evenly and distributed. All decisions are based on the good of the group by the group. Egalitarians prefer a highly supportive supervisor that accepts the group decision (Harris, 2015).

Table 1: Cultural Preferences and Dispositions

Cultural Preferences	Qualities	Motivating Factors	Ideal Work Setting	Supervisory Preference
Individualist	Independent, Innovative, Self-sufficient	Autonomy, Competition Challenge	Informal Structure, Minimal rules and roles	Delegating
Authoritarians	Systematic, Conscientious Compliant	Recognition, Clear guidelines	Formal structure Defined roles And rules	Directing
Hierarchs	Team-oriented Loyal Dedicated	Group-directed Activities and Rewards	Formal structure Strong mission	Coaching
Egalitarians	Cooperative Collegial Fair	Appreciation Collaboration	Informal Structure Democratic	Supporting

Table 1 breaks down the cultural preferences and dispositions of the four categories.

Adapted from Harris, E. L. (2015). *How schools succeed: Context, culture, and strategic leadership*, p 100. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Understanding the dynamics of each of the cultural preferences can direct school leaders to improve the teaching environments.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The method section of the study is divided into six subsections. Research design lays out the framework of the study. Participants and sampling methods describe the population. Data collection, instruments, and data analysis outline how the data will be collected and analyzed, followed by a summary.

Research Design

Research is utilized to answer questions about an observed phenomenon. Qualitative and quantitative are both research techniques used for that purpose however these two techniques are very different. Quantitative research “is the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest” (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 24). Surveys are an example of this type of research. Whereas qualitative research utilizes visual and narrative data to gain an understanding of a phenomenon of interest (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 24). A more general definition of qualitative research is research that takes place in the natural environment with the researcher making observations without disturbing the environment. A good example of this type of researcher is Dr. Jane Goodall. In her research, she demonstrates an understanding of the importance of data collection and observation without manipulation (Goodall, 1998).

The midwestern educational institution is plagued with a 106% turnover of faculty. The institution is the only institution providing career and workforce training to 3 predominantly

agricultural counties. Due to the geographical isolation of the institution similar teaching positions, with excellent benefits and a higher pay scale than public schools' teachers, do not exist within a 45-mile radius. To understand why the educational institution is experiencing such high attrition a case study was conducted. A case study is a qualitative research design approach focused on a bounded system. The approach involves gathering an abundance of narrative and visual data designed to explain the phenomenon of interest (Mills & Gay, 2016). "Case study knowledge is interpreted by readers who are affected not only by the context but also by the populations the reader has in mind" (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 418). Schools across Oklahoma are struggling to keep teachers; the findings of this study can be applied to a similar context.

Value consonance, supervisory support, and relations with colleagues are predictive of both teachers' feeling of belonging and job satisfaction (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2011). These contextual variables are influenced by a school's culture. This qualitative phenomenological case study evaluates the culture relationship with teacher retention at a midwestern educational institution.

Description of the Educational Institution

The focus school serves the community through ten full-time programs. Of the ten full-time programs, four programs have multiple teachers, bringing the full-time faculty count to 15. Excluding the researcher, the faculty for the case study were 14 individuals. The institution has a main campus which houses eight of the ten programs with two programs off-site approximately two miles away. Many of the programs are near each other with the administration in the same building. The complex is located on the north side of the community right next to a community college that also serves the area. The organizational structure of administration consists of a Superintendent/CEO, and Campus Director/COO as the primary authority over the faculty. The

school board consists of five elected officials from the community based on district boundaries. As a type of school that serves other comprehensive high schools, students can come from seven communities which vary greatly in size. The district covers 1,343 square miles. The school was established in 1988. The district serves both adults and high school students. The vision of the school is to enhance the quality of life for stakeholders through changing lives one career at a time (School Website).

Students are given bus transportation from outlying areas but with permission, high school students may also drive to campus. The front of the facility has a circle type drive which allows for easy bus loading and unloading.

The main building is a one-story brick facility built in 1996. Signage is prominent indicating entrances, exits, and the name of the facility. The building has several parking lots closely accessible to the facility. Three flagpoles are placed in front and have the American flag, an Oklahoma flag and a flag which displays the school logo. The green metal roof is built in a style common to other facilities across the state with a pitched roof. As you enter the building, you see a central office with large windows and very open. Visitors are welcomed and greeted by a receptionist and asked to sign in as a visitor to the campus. Faculty, as they arrive to begin their teaching day, are routinely greeted by the campus director, superintendent and director of student services who are in the front area and for them to greet both students and faculty.

Faculty are asked to be at school by 7:45 and are free to leave school at 4:00 p.m. Students attend class from 8:10 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. with a lunch hour of 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The afternoon class is from 12:10 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. Both the morning and afternoon classes have a 15-minute break built into the sessions and the break is often spent in the common break area. The common break area contains pictures of the students of the month and students of the year, a

recycling trash can for metal cans, another television with public announcements, a small kitchen area with a sink and microwave and several vending machines. Round tables and chairs are available and are used by students. A long table and chairs are located by the small kitchen area and is occupied normally by the faculty and staff on break. Faculty take a break with their students, share an opportunity to socialize and network with other faculty but are required to monitor student behavior during this time. Break times are staggered and two to three programs at a time take breaks together. There are wooden flower planter boxes in the front area, containing artificial plants and providing seating space. Directly by this area is a large auditorium that seats 1000 individuals used by the community for all types of meetings and events. A kitchen adjoins this area.

Numerous display cases show awards, pictures and medals that have been achieved by successful students. A large television displays public service announcements as well as positive thoughts and encouragement to those who enter the building. Large windows frame a break area which is clearly visible as you enter the building and from the common lobby area. Restrooms, which are handicapped accessible are in each hallway.

Programs are located down three long hallways. A fourth hallway leads to administration offices and another community meeting area used by faculty and others as well. This area has computer workstations and is where the faculty meeting was held the afternoon that the researcher conducted her study.

One hallway houses primarily health related programs, another hallway has a mixture of business and computer technology, the teacher preparation program, network support and cosmetology. Another hallway contains the marketing director, business and industry

department, an automotive technician program, student assessment and testing and the Power program specifically for individuals on public assistance who are retraining and retooling for employment opportunities. Directly behind this building is another long rectangle building which houses the custodial and maintenance, welding, alternative education program and the bus barn.

Two other programs are housed approximately three miles north of the main facility, right next to the local airport. These two programs work to prepare individuals to work in the aviation industry, either locally, in the state or even nationally. This program is very connected to the local air force base which is growing having recently obtained one of the newest military planes for part of its mission. These teachers do not check-in at the main campus each morning but rather report directly to their separate facility. These teachers are part of the main campus and attend meetings and pick up their mail at the main campus. This facility, though does not have technology or administrative support on-site and does not socialize with the other teachers routinely. The facility does not have a separate administrator who is housed 100% of the time at the facility but rather share those services with the main campus.

The faculty have a “tech training” meeting from 3-4 one day per week and is directed by administration. The purpose of the meeting is to disseminate information to the faculty as a group. This meeting is the only time all the faculty are together during the week.

Population

Qualitative researchers must select participants that provide a depth of understanding of the study phenomenon (Mills, & Gay, 2016). The research study included two groups: all faculty who had taught and left at the educational institution

since 2012 and all faculty currently teaching. The first group, all faculty who had taught and left at the educational institution since 2012, included 16 individuals. The second group, all faculty currently teaching, included 15 individuals. The researcher is currently teaching at the institution and did not participate in the research study as a participant.

The second group then contained 14 individuals. The total population for the research study was 30 individuals.

The entire population that could be contacted was asked to participate in the study. Of the 16 former faculty, the researcher was not able to find the contact information for one individual. Fifteen individuals were contacted that had formerly taught at this educational institution since 2012. All current faculty, excluding the researcher, were invited to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

There were two phases of this research study. Phase one was the administration of an online Qualtrics survey and phase two was face-to-face interviews. The survey was given as one instrument and contained three parts; basic demographic information, the cultural context assessment tool, and the cultural preference assessment tool.

The demographic information of seven questions consisted of position, number of years at the school district, hire date, program, site, and grade level. The cultural context assessment consisted of 24 pairs of statements, 12 associated with grid and 12 associated with group. Based on the answers to the 24 questions, the participants perception of the school culture was defined. The cultural preference assessment tool also consisted of 24 pairs of statements, 12 associated with grid and 12 associated with group. Based on the answers to the 24 questions the participants preferred culture was defined. Both surveys are Likert-type on a 1-5 scale with one and five representing the extreme poles in the continuum with 2-4 making a continuous scale. Based on

the researcher's experiences at the institution there appeared to be a disconnect between the faculty's preferred environment and the perceived environment. These survey instruments evaluated both the preferred and perceived culture for each participant and presented vital information to the social dynamics of the entire group.

Sampling method. The study population is the entire group that meets the study criteria (Mills, & Gay, 2016). In this case study the criteria were current or former faculty of the midwestern educational institution since 2012. The 30 current and former faculty since 2012 serve as the study population. A sample of the population was selected to participate in the interview portion of the study. The sampling method for the interview portion of the study was purposeful based on the participants preferred environment, established by the cultural preference assessment tool, availability, and program taught. The first step in sampling was to obtain an IRB. Once approval was given, the Director of Human Resources at the educational institution was contacted for a list of current and former faculty beginning on August 1, 2012, to present. Once all the faculty was identified, an email invitation was sent to the current faculty using the readily available Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education directory in the public domain. Obtaining former faculty members' email addresses began with personal contacts using snowball sampling and was more difficult. Follow up emails were sent out weekly (one per week) for up to four weeks. Nine of the former staff were reached.

The email contained information concerning the IRB and the opportunity to consent to the study or to exit the link. Once the participant indicated consent, the survey continued with the demographic information first. The demographic information was followed by the cultural context assessment tool and the cultural preference assessment tool.

The cultural preference assessment tool served as a sampling survey. The survey divided the participants into four preference groups. Interview participants were purposefully selected based on the preferred environment, availability, and program. The cultural context assessment tool is “Appendix B,” and the cultural preference assessment tool is “Appendix C.”

Data Collection

Participants were sent an invitation email. The email contained general information about the study, the cultural preference assessment tool, and cultural context assessment tool. The first step in the process was obtaining informed consent from each participant electronically.

The administration was highly supportive of the research and interested in how to stem the attrition rate at their school. Because of such strong support, time was allocated during a weekly faculty meeting for data collection. No coercion occurred and faculty were asked if they wished to not complete the survey to simply work on the computer quietly until all had finished. At the time, the researcher did not know who was doing the survey and who was simply working on the computer and had no evidence immediately of the level of participation in the study. During the weekly faculty meeting, current faculty could complete the surveys. The study was explained, and the group was advised that participation was voluntary. This group took the survey at the same time and in the same room. Additionally, participants were asked to complete a consent form for an interview in the event they were selected to do so. All 14 current faculty opted to participate.

The data was collected from the previous faculty no longer teaching at the institution in the same manner with an email asking for their participation. The individuals who wished to participate then completed the consent form electronically and followed the link to the survey. The former faculty completed the survey on their own computers all in different locations.

The researcher carefully reviewed and analyzed the results of the surveys of both groups. Using Douglas' typology, purposeful sampling occurred to determine who would be interviewed. Interview participants were purposefully selected based on the preferred environment; collectivist, individualist and corporate. No participants scored in the category of bureaucratic. In addition, selection criteria also included availability of the participant, and program taught. The researcher made every effort to include as many different programs as possible. Care was also taken to represent the categories of the typology and maintain anonymity of participants.

Ten participants were purposefully selected to interview. All communication with the participants to schedule the interview specifics were conducted through emails. The interviews were scheduled at a date, time, and location convenient for the selected participants. Five interviews were conducted at noon or lunchtime and the other five after school. Locations ranged for local eating establishments including a local coffee shop and a barbeque restaurant and all were in public places. Interviews averaged one hour with the shortest 30 minutes and the longest one hour and 30 minutes. The interview began with a brief explanation of the study and the researcher requested the participant to sign a consent form for the interview. Efforts were made to be comfortable and relaxed during the interview and the researcher used the recording application on a personal cell phone to record the interview verbatim.

The interview consisted of seven open-ended questions assessing the culture of the school. Several of the interview questions were adapted from research by Ozen (2018). Other interview questions developed based on participant answers and included probing questions when appropriate. There are no known risks associated with this project beyond those in normal

daily life. Email invitations were sent out in April 2019 with interviews scheduled beginning in April and ending in May.

Interviews were transcribed using a transcription application, Transcribe and were returned to the participants for member checking. It was difficult to get much input or corrections from the participants after the interview had taken place.

Trustworthiness/Credibility

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is multifaceted. Researchers must seek to establish it by maintaining truth in data collection while representing the participants' experiences (Shenton, 2004). To ensure trustworthiness, conclusions must be directly derived from the data and can be applied to other settings in a similar context (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility, as described by Shenton (2004), is achieved when participants can recognize the shared experiences in the researcher's description of the phenomenon. Triangulation using multiple methods of data collection are utilized to create an accurate picture of the phenomenon. Once data is collected, a summary of the data is given to the participants to check the data for accuracy and to ensure the data is a credible account of the experience (Shenton, 2004).

To establish both trustworthiness and credibility, the design of this case study is to accurately represent the relationship of school culture and teacher retention. The phenomenon was examined through surveys and interviews, which were given to each participant. By collecting data in two different ways, the weakness of each method was avoided (Mill & Gay, 2016). Participants were given a report of the findings before the completed work to check for the accuracy of their experiences (Shenton, 2004). Researchers kept reflexivity notes to diligently practice avoiding bias during the research process (Mill & Gay, 2016; Shenton, 2004).

Reflexivity

In the effort to find valid, reliable answers to questions, researchers must work to maintain an environment free of personal influences, and researcher bias. Reflexivity is not an easy task and is one that requires constant monitoring. Reflexivity serves as to tool of self-reflection in the creation of knowledge (Berger, 2015; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Berger (2015) believes that researchers must be aware of how personal beliefs and views influence their research. Personal characteristics and experiences assist or limit the researcher's ability to conduct the research. In some cases, shared experiences by researchers and participates creates a level of trust between the two parties. Shared experiences can cloud judgment and influence interpretations of findings. Researchers must be diligent in self-reflection to maintain objectivity (Berger, 2015). Through reflexivity, researchers step back and critically look at the self-influences imposed on the research.

Qualitative research is especially vulnerable to researcher influences due to the intimate relationship between the research and participants (Berger, 2015). Researchers must be very self-aware and alert. “Researchers need to increasingly focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity; better understand the role of self in the creation of knowledge; carefully self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the universal” (Berger, 2015, p.220). Through increasing self-awareness, researches become more alert to ethical issues through critical analysis and interpretation of the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexivity not only becomes a tool to minimize bias and researcher influences but can also magnify ethical issues within the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed as described by the 3-part process by Mills and Gay (2016). “The process focuses on (1) becoming familiar with the data and identifying potential themes; (2) examining data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, and activity; and (3) categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes” (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 583). Data from both the surveys and interviews were triangulated to verify the accuracy (Mills & Gay, 2016).

After the interviews were transcribed and returned to participants, the researcher read over the ten interviews repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Using coding and highlighting, the researcher began to look for themes and categories that were common to all. The researcher works as a teacher who works primarily with quantitative data and this work with qualitative data was a new experience. Using Douglas’ typology, the researcher looked to see if the data supported her theory and if so, how. Data which indicated other ideas or themes were also analyzed to better understand the participants’ responses. Comparisons were made between the answers on the survey and the interviews for clarity, consistency, inconsistencies and meaning. Every effort was made to be true to the data and to allow the participants' voices to be heard.

Summary

Data collection began with online surveys, followed by face to face interviews. The interviews created a picture of the participants' experiences at the educational institution. These experiences were evaluated for characteristics of culture and climate that influence teacher retention. The study aims to spotlight the issues affecting teacher retention; issues that can be changed to improve the educational environment.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study based on the analysis of the data.

Purpose and Objectives

This study examines the relationship of school culture and teacher retention. Data collected answered the following research questions:

R1. What is the relationship of school culture and teacher retention?

R2. What characteristics of school culture impact teacher retention?

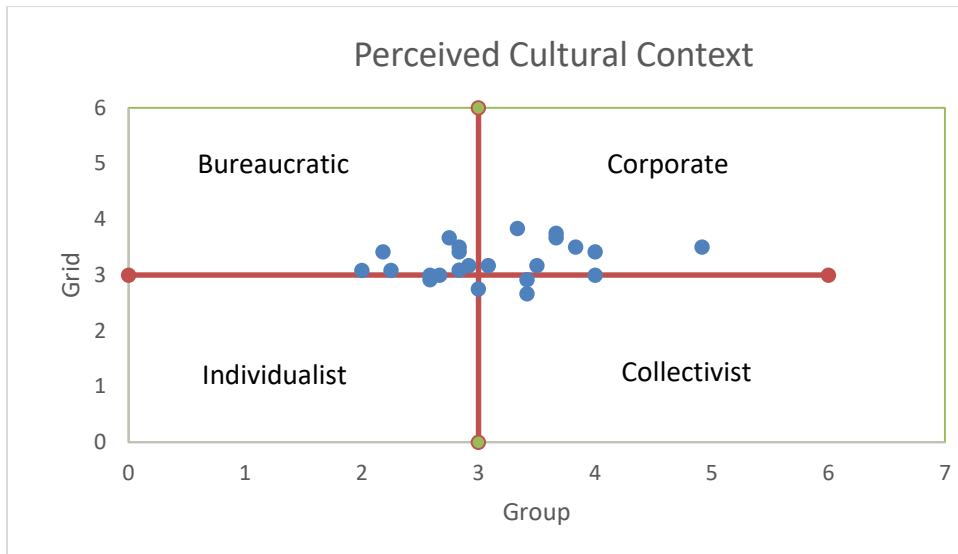
R3. How can school culture be described?

Descriptive Findings

There were two phases of this research study. Phase one was the administration of an online Qualtrics survey and phase two was face-to-face interviews. The survey was given as one instrument and contained three parts; basic demographic information, the cultural context assessment tool, and the cultural preference assessment tool. For phase two 10 participants were purposefully selected to interview. All communication with the participants to schedule the interview specifics were conducted through emails. The interviews were scheduled at a date, time, and location convenient for the selected participants. The interview consisted of seven open-ended questions assessing the culture and the climate of the school. Other interview questions developed based on participant answers and included probing questions when appropriate.

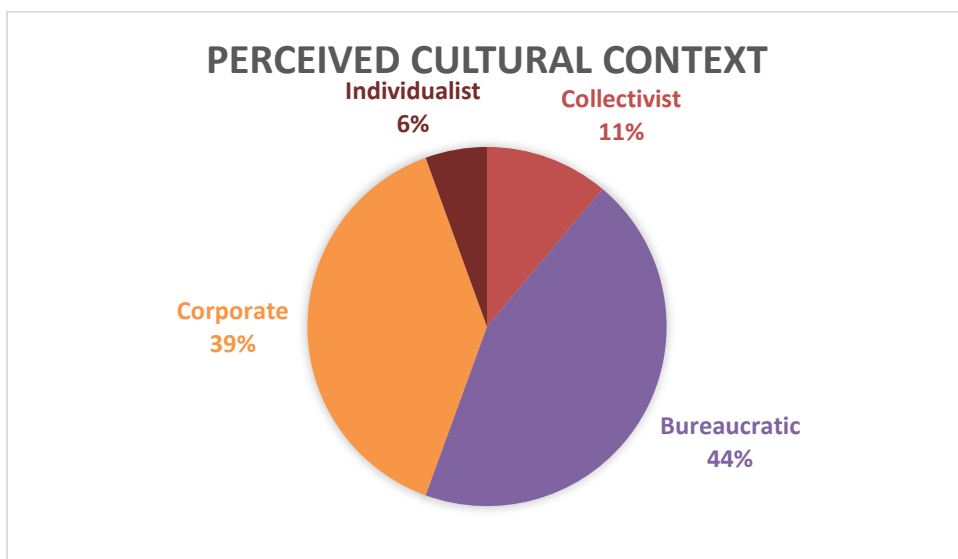
Perceived Cultural Context. Data collection began with online cultural preference and perception surveys. Participants consented in an invitation email then proceeded to Qualtrics to answer the surveys. The surveys categorized the participants' responses on 24 questions, into one of four categories based on the perceptions of the cultural context. The graphs below highlight the responses from 23 participants.

Figure 2: Perceived cultural context quadrant disbursement



Of the 23 participants, eight perceive the environment as bureaucratic, seven participants perceive the environment as corporate, two participants perceived the environment as collectivist, one perceived the environment as an individualist, and five participants scores fell in the midline of either grid or group.

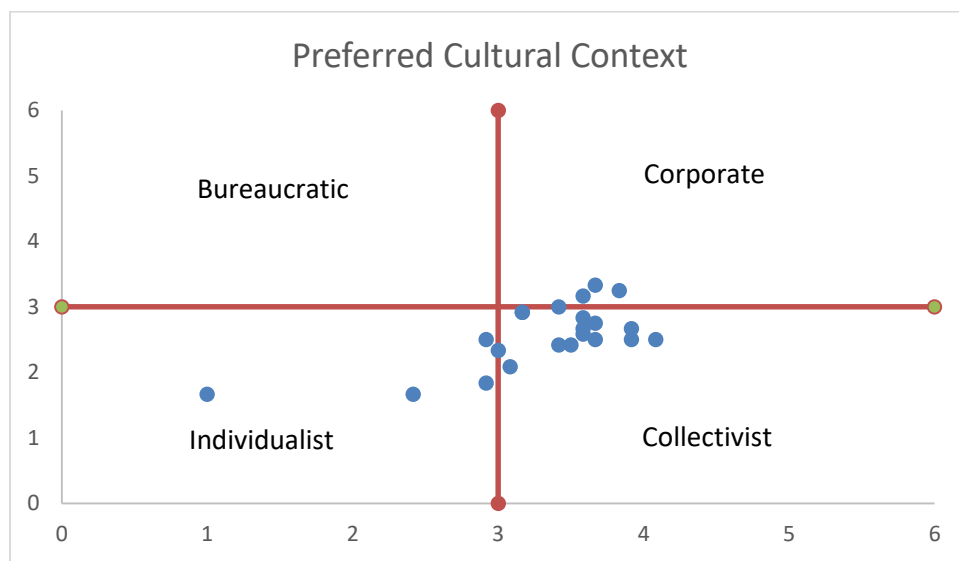
Figure 3: Percentage of perceived cultural context per category



Excluding the midline data, the perception of the culture is 44% bureaucratic, 39% corporate, 11% collectivist, and 6% individual.

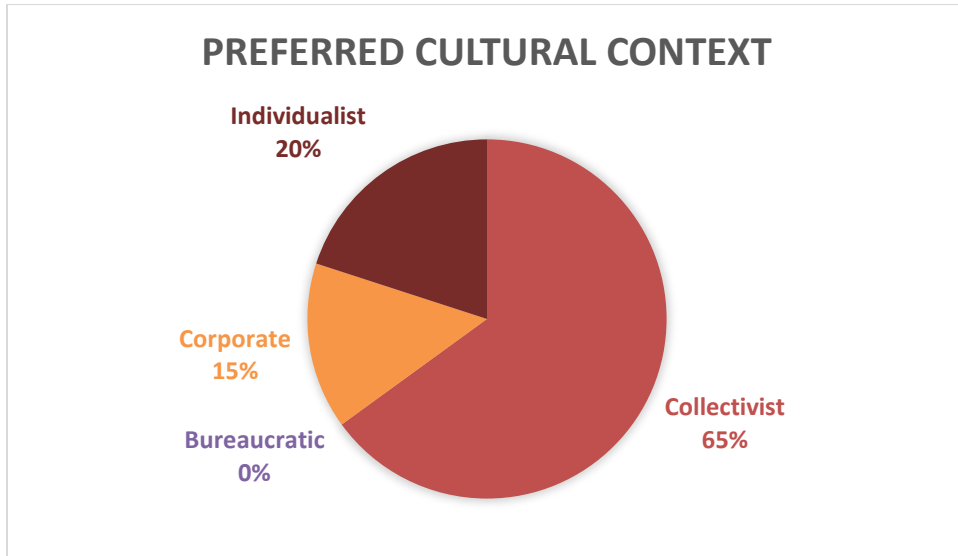
Preferred Cultural Context. The next 24 questions measured the cultural preferences of the participants. In other words, if the participant could mold the context to meet their preferences, what would the context resemble?

Figure 4: Preferred Cultural Context quadrant disbursement



One participant did not answer the last set of questions and exited the survey. Of the remaining 22 participants, 13 participants prefer the collectivist environment; four participants prefer the individualist environment, three of the participants prefer the corporate environment and two participants scores are in the midline of either group or grid. For four participants, their perception and preference agreed.

Figure 5: Percentage of preferred cultural context per category



Excluding the midline data, the preferred culture is 65% collectivist, 20% individualist, 15% corporate, and 0% bureaucratic.

Interviews. Of these 23 participants, 10 participants were purposefully selected based on their preferred environment, availability, and program. Interview questions grouped responses from the teachers' interviews. Six participants preferred collectivist; two preferred individualist, one preferred corporate, and one participant with midline data were selected. These participants represent the data distribution in figure 5. Similar responses in the data were assigned to the appropriate themes. Figure 6 is a breakdown of the interview questions and answers.

Table 2: Interview questions and answers by percentage

Interview Questions	Answers
Years of teaching	60% more than five years 40% five years or less
Managerial Behaviors	100% Authoritarian

Perception of Teacher-teacher interactions	100% Positive interactions
Why Leave	67% Administration interactions/decisions; 33% Students
Why Stay	14% Coworkers; 86% personal reasons
Perception of Justice	90% fair
Perception of Climate Influenced most by	100% positive Teachers
Perception of Working Culture Influenced most by	90% Bureaucratic; 10% Corporate Administration

Interpreting data with grid and group. Analysis of the data provides insight into the social environment of the focus school. Themes from Mary Douglas's Typology were used to categorize the data. The institution has a centralized organizational structure with a chain of command that is more symbolic than functional (strong grid and weak group = bureaucratic). The COO/principal of the school is the supervisor of the faculty; however, the superintendent retains ultimate authority and decision-making overall decisions. The school has high student turnover due to all programs can be completed in two years or less coupled with the high teacher attrition allegiance to the school is limited by both students and faculty (weak group). Faculty are encouraged to established classroom rules and management practices; however, consideration for program changes such as entrance requirements for two programs has been ignored (strong grid). Emphasis is placed on order and discipline with strict adherence to rules (strong grid). The facilities are structured and very well maintained (strong grid and strong group = corporate). The faculty play an active role in facility maintenance by reporting any repair issues promptly and working to maintain their classrooms to the expected standard. The faculty support their respective programs but do not work collaboratively with other programs (weak group). A mentor program for new faculty does exist; however, collaboration time is not encouraged

beyond the first year (strong grid and weak group = bureaucratic). Many faculty complain about after-hours activities they are required to attend (strong grid and weak group = bureaucratic). All activities are directed by the administration and most of the socialization is outside of work and segregated into small groups (strong grid and weak group = bureaucratic). Time is strictly regulated, and all activities follow the school calendar (strong grid and strong group = corporate). Faculty are supported in choosing their individual professional learning focus for the year (weak grid and weak group = individualist). Most faculty are concerned with their individual program only and will fight for their program needs (weak grid and weak group = individualist).

Based on observations and interviews, the prevailing environment is bureaucratic. The bureaucratic environment is described as top-down decision making with the superintendent at the top of the organizational chain. This environment allows for limited collaboration, and social exchange is outside of the school setting. “Teachers work in seclusion in classrooms and focus primarily on teaching and learning tasks specific to their classes” (Harris, 2015, p. 126).

To a lesser extent, the focus school is shaped by individualist and corporate qualities. The individualist environment is one that is competitive and challenging with much autonomy. The individuals in this environment do not like to conform to a group and prefer environments with few rules (Harris, 2015). The corporate environment is described as a hierarchical organizational structure with much collaboration and group decision making. Teachers can find autonomy within the shared goals of the school. Both the corporate and bureaucratic environments have a structured chain of command with a focus on procedures, rules, and control (Harris, 2015).

R1. What is the relationship of school culture and teacher retention? The culture is one of high expectations with well-defined roles. Of the faculty that have left 67% reported leaving due

directly to administration interactions and decisions. Thirty-three percent reported leaving due to student issues; this portion of the group also lacked confidence in administration's ability to help with student issues.

R2. What characteristics of school culture impact teacher retention? Based on the interview data, one common theme that was stated by participants, in fact by all participants, was the word "bureaucratic". Sixty-five percent of participants prefer a collectivist culture. The weak grid strong group preference of most of the faculty contrasts with the strong grid weak group perception.

R3. How can school culture be described? Based on the data in interviews, nine of the interviewees describe the culture as bureaucratic with the superintendent as the driving force behind all decisions and enforcement of all rules. One participant described the culture as corporate with a hierarchical chain of command with well-defined roles and rules. The culture of the educational institution as described by most of the faculty, 44% survey and 90% interviewed, is one of strong grid and weak group, thus a bureaucratic environment with authoritarian social dynamics.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Introduction

Chapter I introduced the low retention rate phenomenon occurring at a mid-western educational institution. Provided the necessary framework to analyze the culture and climate aspects of the social environment through the lens of Mary Douglas' typology of grid and group.

Chapter II focused on existing research concerning administration influences on teacher retention, support of teachers new to the teaching profession, as well as the climate and culture dynamics of an educational setting. The research sets the platform to dig deeper into the social environment of a school district struggling to keep teachers.

Chapter III described the methods to execute the study, beginning with the collection of data from the online surveys of 23 participants and ending with interviews of 10 of the 23 participants.

Chapter IV presented the data from the 23 participants in the study. Each participant completed two surveys. The cultural preference and perception surveys grouped the data into

four different social environments. Interviews of the ten purposefully selected participants created a picture of their unique experiences. These experiences will be explained further in chapter V.

Purpose

Teacher shortages are a staggering problem across Oklahoma, and many factors contribute to that problem. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of school culture and teacher retention at a mid-western educational institution.

Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between a schools' culture and climate with teacher retention. The study surveyed 23 current and former faculty of an educational institution experiencing a high attrition rate. Ten participants were interviewed to identify the culture and climate characteristics leading to high attrition rates.

Findings

R1. What is the relationship of school culture and teacher retention? The relationship of school culture and teacher retention are found in the establishment of the culture through the behaviors of administration. These behaviors appear to be the most significant issue from each of the teachers interviewed. The interviews indicate administration has clear and high expectations of the staff. Boundaries and roles are clearly defined and strictly enforced. A hierarchical chain of command exists, and all interviewees are aware of the leadership roles. The administration makes themselves very accessible to the faculty; an example of this is frequent walkthroughs in each classroom

and weekly faculty meetings. Any issues found to conflict with expectations, boundaries, or roles will be addressed. These day to day behaviors have shaped the experiences of the faculty and established the culture. Some daily routines leave the teachers “feeling on edge.” The classroom visits are an example of a daily routine that is perceived as “spying” or “just looking for something wrong.” To cope with this perception, one teacher reports, “I just stay in stealth mode, under the radar.”

Faculty are encouraged to establish classroom rules and management practices however consideration for program changes such as entrance requirements have been ignore. In this case, strong grid and weak group indicates a bureaucratic environment.

R2. What characteristics of school culture impact teacher retention? Based on data, the characteristics reported by the teachers interviewed and supported by the surveys and observations were authoritarian, lack of support, limited autonomy and isolation. These characteristics are supported by phrases such as “nit-picking,” “pressure,” “controlling,” and “intimidation.” The administration has also been reported to make “knee-jerk” decisions. The top-down decision making with limited consideration for faculty is isolating. Some faculty attributed the feelings of isolation to the “nature of what we teach,” most programs are single instructor programs. The educational institution’s program structure aligns with weak group as faculty reported little time for collaboration but reported a willingness to work together. Several participants expressed a lack of confidence in administration; one stated: “they don’t know what I teach, so they can’t help me.” The statement is supported by an administrator’s lack of classroom experience in this type of educational system and no technical knowledge of the subject being taught. Several participants interviewed expressed support needs, from classroom management to test question writing, have gone unsupported. These participants entered the

classroom after a career in another field and teaching is a new career for which they had no formal training. The majority of the faculty prefer an egalitarian environment which conflicts with both the grid and group of the perceived authoritarian environment.

R3. How can school culture be described? Based on the limited data in interviews, 90% bureaucratic, 10% corporate. The administration has clear expectations of the faculty performance in each classroom and strongly encourage collaborative teaching strategies however those strategies are not utilized to guide/train the faculty. The training style of administration for the faculty is in direct conflict with the expectations of the faculty. An example of this is the weekly faculty meetings that are lecture-type with no collaborative input from the faculty. Administration verbally promotes a collectivist environment but models a bureaucratic one. Several faculty stated that the administration was not always consistent when handling issues or responding to requests. "Sometimes it's let's get this thing nipped. Let's take care of it and then other times it's like well, it's not that big a deal, you know, it's kinda like they are going to blow it off." They also expressed frustration from the limited autonomy of the perceived environment. One participant described the environment as "we will listen to you; we will nod our heads, but we are going to do it this way."

Discussion

This study attempts to understand the high attrition rate phenomenon at a midwestern educational institution. The results in the study suggest that the faculty's perception of the social environment is predominantly authoritarian. The strict obedience to authority the lack of autonomy, collaboration, and shared decision making are the prevailing issues in direct conflict with egalitarianism social preference of most participants. The bureaucratic environment, coupled with the small size of the staff and program diversity leaves faculty feeling isolated.

However, 100% of the faculty interviewed that have left the institution reported leaving due directly or indirectly to the interactions, decisions, and lack of support by administration. This finding is supported by research which suggests perceptions of school leadership has more impact on teacher retention than any other working condition (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011).

The pressures and values of the corporate, bureaucratic and individualist environments observed by the researcher are in contrast to the collectivist “all for one and one for all” mindset preferred by most of the faculty. The frustrations produced from the discord between the desired culture and the perceived culture is felt by most of the faculty interviewed. The dissonance could be attributed to the mistrust of the collectivist preference in the perceived corporate and bureaucratic management practices (Harris, 2015).

Research describes the culture of a school as the shared beliefs, attitudes and behaviors by all the members (Barkley, 2014; Lewis, Asberry, DeJarnett, & King, 2016). Based on this study through the lens of Mary Douglas’s grid and group typology, the bureaucratic culture is the prevailing issue for faculty. All the interviewees expressed frustrations with the perceived environment; however, some found ways to cope with the administration dictates better than others. Faculty to faculty interactions were also described as positive with discord only between faculty and administration. The faculty currently working at the school believe in what they are doing and have a good attitude about their jobs however their primary objection to the current environment was limited autonomy, inconsistent support, and authoritarian social game. The overall sentiment of the faculty was summed up by one participant’s statement, “I feel like when you hire people, then you need to give them the freedom to shine.” The current culture appears to have a negative influence on teacher retention as teachers are looking for a place to shine.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to the study. The first limitation can be attributed to only one school district was studied. Second, not all former faculty participated in the study due to the difficulty in contacting those teachers. Due to only completing ten interviews, it is not meant to be representative of the sample population. An additional concern is the researcher's limited experience in research, and the close relationship with the institution as an employee can influence the approach to the study.

Applications to Practice

Based on the findings of the study, teacher support and administrative relations need improvement. To improve the teaching environment in the current culture efforts by both the administration and faculty should play an active role. Practices by the administration include designated collaborative time for faculty, clear lines of communication, and modeling of desired behaviors. Practices by faculty include organized and structured use of collaboration time with goals and objectives for each meeting, following the lines of communication and seeking mediation from the appropriate chain of command.

One way to implement these practices into the current working culture is through a faculty senate. The faculty senate should provide a platform of communication with a focus on opening and strengthening the lines of communication between faculty and administration. Administration should designate time for the faculty senate to meet. The meetings should be structured with goals and objectives. The Senate should meet one time per month for collaboration. The collaborative time should also give the faculty the much-needed support to balance the demands of the teaching environment. The faculty should work together to find

solutions for classroom management issues common among all classrooms. The faculty and administration should make efforts to collaborate and establish goals and objectives for the weekly faculty meeting to mirror the desired teaching environment.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future studies into the relationship of school size with culture.
2. Future studies of the influence of teacher organizations on teacher retention.
3. Future studies focused on teacher and administrator trust in this current environment.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions for Current and Former Instructional Staff Participants

The following open-ended interview questions were asked. Several of the questions were adapted from research by Ozen (2018).

1. How long have you been a teacher, and how long in your current position?
2. How do you perceive the administration's managerial behaviors?
3. How do you perceive teacher interactions?
4. Describe the factors that influenced your decision to leave/stay?
5. What is your perception of the school climate?
6. How do you perceive justice in the school?
7. How do you perceive the working culture?

APPENDIX B

Cultural Context Assessment Tool

Demographic information

Position:

Program:

Total years of service at school district:

Are you currently still working at the district? Yes or No

School district:

School site:

Grade level:

Grid consideration questions

1 Authority structures are:

Decentralized/
nonhierarchical

1

2

3

4

5

centralized/
hierarchical

2 Roles are:

Nonspecific/ no
explicit job
description

1

2

3

4

5

Specialized/ explicit
job descriptions

3 Individual teachers have:

full autonomy in
generating
educational goals
for their
classrooms

1

2

3

4

5

No autonomy in
generating their
educational goals for
their classrooms

4 Individual teachers have:

full autonomy in
textbook selection

1

2

3

4

5

no autonomy in
textbook selection

5 Individual teachers have:

full autonomy in
selecting
instructional
methods/strategies

1

2

3

4

5

no autonomy in choosing
instructional methods/
strategies

- 6 Students are:
- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| encouraged to participate in/take ownership of their education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | discouraged from participating in/taking ownership of their education |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- 7 Teachers obtain instructional resources (i.e., technology, manipulatives, materials and tools) through:
- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| individual competition/ negotiation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Administrative allotment/ allocation |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
- 8 Instruction is:
- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Individualized/ personalized for each student | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | not individualized/ personalized for each student |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- 9 Individual teachers are motivated by:
- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| intrinsic/self-defined interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | extrinsic/ institutional reward |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
- 10 Hiring decisions are:
- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| decentralized/ controlled by teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | centralized/ controlled by administration |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- 11 Class schedules are determined through:
- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| individual teacher negotiation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | institutional rules/ routines |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
- 12 Rules and procedures are:
- | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| few/ implicit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | numerous/ explicit |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|

Group consideration questions

- 1 Instructional activities are initiated/planned by:

individual teachers working alone	1	2	3	4	5	all educators working collaboratively
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

- 2 Educators' socialization and work are:

separate/ dichotomous activities	1	2	3	4	5	incorporated/ united activities
----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------

- 3 Extrinsic rewards primarily benefit:

the individual	1	2	3	4	5	everyone at the school site
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------------

- 4 Teaching and learning are planned/ organized around:

individual teacher goals/ interests	1	2	3	4	5	group goals/ interests
-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

- 5 Teaching performance is evaluated according to:

individual teacher goals, priorities, and criteria	1	2	3	4	5	group goals, priorities, and criteria
--	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

- 6 Members work:

in isolation toward goals and objectives	1	2	3	4	5	collaboratively toward goals and objectives
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 7 Curricular goals are generated:

individually	1	2	3	4	5	collaboratively
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------

- 8 Communication flows primarily through:

individual, informal networks	1	2	3	4	5	corporate, formal networks
-------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------------

- 9 Instructional resources are controlled/ owned:
- | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| individually | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | collaboratively |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
- 10 Educators and students have:
- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no allegiance/
loyalty to the
school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | much allegiance/
loyalty to the school |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- 11 Responsibilities of teachers and administrators are:
- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ambiguous/
fragmented with
no accountability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | clear/ communal with
much accountability |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- 12 Most decisions are made:
- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| privately by
factions or
independent
verdict | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | corporately by
consensus or group
approval |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|

APPENDIX C

Cultural Preference Assessment Tool

Grid consideration questions

- 1 I prefer a work atmosphere where authority structures are:

Decentralized/ nonhierarchical	1	2	3	4	5	centralized/ hierarchical
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 2 I prefer a work atmosphere where my role(s) is:

Nonspecific/ no explicit job description	1	2	3	4	5	Specialized/ explicit job descriptions
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 3 I prefer a work atmosphere where individual teachers have:

full autonomy in generating educational goals for their classrooms	1	2	3	4	5	No autonomy in generating their educational goals for their classrooms
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 4 I prefer a work atmosphere where teachers have:

full autonomy in textbook selection	1	2	3	4	5	no autonomy in textbook selection
--	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------------------

- 5 I prefer a work atmosphere where individual teachers have:

full autonomy in selecting instructional methods/strategies	1	2	3	4	5	no autonomy in choosing instructional methods/ strategies
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 6 I prefer a teaching and learning atmosphere where students are:

	encouraged to participate in/take ownership of their education	1	2	3	4	5	discouraged from participating in/taking ownership of their education
7	I prefer a work atmosphere where teachers obtain instructional resources (i.e., technology, manipulatives, materials and tools) through:						
	individual competition/ negotiation	1	2	3	4	5	Administrative allotment/ allocation
8	I prefer a teaching and learning atmosphere where instruction is:						
	Individualized/ personalized for each student	1	2	3	4	5	not individualized/ personalized for each student
9	I am motivated by:						
	intrinsic/self-defined interests	1	2	3	4	5	extrinsic/ institutional reward
10	I prefer a work atmosphere where hiring decisions are:						
	decentralized/ controlled by teachers	1	2	3	4	5	centralized/ controlled by administration

11 I prefer a work atmosphere where class schedules are determined through:

individual teacher negotiation	1	2	3	4	5	institutional rules/ routines
--------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------------

12 I prefer a work atmosphere where rules and procedures are:

few/ implicit	1	2	3	4	5	numerous/ explicit
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------

Group consideration questions

1 I prefer a work atmosphere where instructional activities are initiated/planned by:

individual teachers working alone	1	2	3	4	5	all educators working collaboratively
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

2 I prefer a work atmosphere where educators' socialization and work are:

separate/ dichotomous activities	1	2	3	4	5	incorporated/ united activities
----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------

3 I prefer a work atmosphere where rewards primarily benefit:

the individual	1	2	3	4	5	everyone at the school site
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------------

4 I prefer a work atmosphere where teaching and learning are planned/ organized around

individual teacher goals/ interests	1	2	3	4	5	group goals/ interests
-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

5 I prefer a work atmosphere where teaching performance is evaluated according to :

individual teacher goals, priorities, and criteria	1	2	3	4	5	group goals, priorities, and criteria
--	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

6 I prefer a work atmosphere where members work:

in isolation toward goals and objectives	1	2	3	4	5	collaboratively toward goals and objectives
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 7 | I prefer a work atmosphere where curricular goals are generated | | | | | | |
| | individually | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | collaboratively |
| 8 | I prefer a work atmosphere where communication flows primarily through: | | | | | | |
| | individual,
informal networks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | corporate, formal
networks |
| 9 | I prefer a work atmosphere where instructional resources are controlled/ owned: | | | | | | |
| | individually | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | collaboratively |
| 10 | I prefer a work atmosphere where educators and students have: | | | | | | |
| | no allegiance/
loyalty to the
school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | much allegiance/
loyalty to the school |
| 11 | I prefer a work atmosphere where the responsibilities of teachers and administrators are: | | | | | | |
| | ambiguous/
fragmented with
no accountability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | clear/ communal with
much accountability |
| 12 | I prefer a work atmosphere where most decisions are made: | | | | | | |
| | privately by
factions or
independent
verdict | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | corporately by
consensus or group
approval |

APPENDIX D

Email Recruitment Letter

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University College of Education, and I am conducting a study on current and former instructional staff at Midwestern Educational Institution. Participation in the study includes an online survey. All of these survey questions will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the online portion of the study, you may take part in a face-to-face interview that is scheduled at a time and place that are convenient for you. The interview is not mandatory, and not all participants will take part in interviews. The face-to-face interview will last no more than one hour. Upon completion of the interview, you will be provided with the transcript to proofread for clarifications.

Your participation will be completely anonymous as your name, or your school's name will not be used in the findings of the study. The results of the study will be offered in a narrative format in which your information is identified through a number system only. The school in which you teach will not be named in the study.

You have been assigned the number **XXX**. Please enter this number in the appropriate box on the survey. Click on the link below to take the survey or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8pPn5FKq60N0jkh

You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you have any questions concerning the study: dstacel@okstate.edu, (580) 471-8740 or contact my OSU advisor, Dr. Mary Jo Self at maryjo.self@okstate.edu, (405) 744-9191.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, Ok 74078 or by calling (405) 744-3377. You may also email the IRB at irb@okstate.edu.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to meeting you in person for an interview,
Stacey Davis



Approved: 03/12/2019 Protocol #: ED-19-30

APPENDIX E

Consent Documentation

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION: I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements: I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I understand that my data will be kept confidential. I understand that I am one of 35 participants in this study.

As a participant, I will be assigned a number, and data will only be reported by that number. At no point will my name or demographic information be released. The data will report the quadrant placement from Mary Douglas's Typology of Grid and Group. Grid and group are designed to take into account the total social environment as well as the relationships among members and their context. This information will be reported to the school only for the purposes of constructive change within the school if needed.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



Approved: 03/12/2019 Protocol #: ED-19-30

Risks: There are no risks associated with the project, which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of how research is conducted. The study will enhance a better understanding of what factors contribute to the high attrition rate at the Midwestern Educational Institution.

Compensation: No compensation

Your rights and Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept secret. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password-protected computer in a locked office, and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed.

Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and request information about the results of the study:

Stacey Davis, a graduate student in Workforce and Adult Education, (580) 471-8740. Dr. Mary Jo Self, Faculty Adviser, 261 Willard Hall, Oklahoma State University, (405) 744-9191.



Approved: 03/12/2019 Protocol #: ED-19-30

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS: I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CULTURE WITH TEACHER RETENTION: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

Investigators(s): Stacey Davis, M.S. Graduate Student in Workforce and Adult Education: Adviser: Mary Jo Self, Faculty Adviser in Workforce and Adult Education.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between school culture with teacher retention. The Midwestern Educational Institution offers workforce preparation and has experienced 84% turnover since 2012. The high attrition rate is concerning to administration, especially since half of the employees leaving are teachers. Understanding why teachers are leaving can influence school districts to implement improvements to the teaching environment. The goal of this study is to identify issues of culture and or climate that may influence teacher retention. Studies such as this can assist other educational entities in avoiding teacher loss.

What to expect: This research study is administered online with a possible follow-up face-to-face interview. Participation in the research will involve the completion of an online survey. The first section is questions concerning your teaching background at SWTC. The second section is the Cultural Context Assessment Tool, consists of 24



Approved: 03/12/2019 Protocol #: ED-19-307

questions on a 5-point Likert type scale. The third section is the Cultural Preference Assessment Tool, consists of 24 questions on a 5-point Likert type scale. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. You will be expected to complete the online survey once. It should take less than 30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the online survey, you will have the opportunity to take part in a face-to-face interview. The interview is not required, and not all participants will be scheduled for an interview. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will concern aspects of climate and culture at SWTC. You may skip any interview question you do not want to answer. The face-to-face interview will take approximately 1 hour at a time and place of your choosing.



Approved: 03/12/2019 Protocol #: ED-19-30



APPENDIX F

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 08/15/2019
Application Number: ED-19-30
Proposal Title: The Relationship Between School Culture with Teacher Retention
Principal Investigator: Stacey Davis
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Maryjo Self
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt
Exempt Category: New Category 2: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior if at least one of the following is met- anonymous, disclosure would not cause harm, or identifiable with limited IRB review completed.

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744- 3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Stacey Davis

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CULTURE WITH TEACHER
RETENTION

Major Field: Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Teaching, Learning,
and Leadership at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July,
2019.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Physical Education
at University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Chickasha, Oklahoma in 2001.

Experience:

Southwest Technology Center, Biomedical Science, Instructor, 2012-present

Southwest Technology Center, Health Science, Instructor, 2010-2012

Carter Home Health, Physical Therapist Assistant, 2009-2010

Altus Public School, Bulldog Academy Science Teacher, 2008-2009

Elkview General Hospital, Physical Therapist Assistant, 2007-2009

Lawton Public Schools, Physical Therapist Assistant, 2002-2006

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Apprentice Athletic Trainer, 1999-
2002

Professional Memberships:

Member of the Oklahoma Association for Career & Technology Education,
2010-present, Served on the STEM Board 2015-2018

Member of the National Athletic Trainers Association, 2003-present

Member of the Oklahoma Athletic Trainers Association, 2003-present